



All Europe Taekwon-do Federation

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Interview with Master Trần Triệu Quân - ITF President

Interview made by Monika Kocharńska, 21 October 2004

Monika Kocharńska: Have you ever expected that someday you would be President of ITF?

Trần Triệu Quân: I have never thought of running for office and to be elected President of the ITF. When I found that Mr. Chang Ung and his supporters were trying to impose their control of the ITF in violations of our ITF Constitution, it was my view that it was not correct and that it showed no respect for all of our ITF members, let alone for General Choi who always submitted

himself for election in accordance with the democratic process. I strongly believed that we had to fight for justice and for the good future of the ITF. It is the main reason that motivated me to run for the election at the 14th ITF Congress in Warsaw on June 13th 2003.



MKJ: How did it happen? How were you nominated for the highest function in ITF?

TTQ: As I told you earlier, given the confusion created by Chang Ung's group, the ITF needed a leader. At the Juniors World Championship in December 2002 in Puerto Rico, several masters and national leaders encouraged me to run for the presidency. It took me some time to think it through and to consult with friends and family on my capacity to lead the organization, how best to serve the ITF, and how I could keep a balance between work and family responsibilities.

First, I have had a good and a close relationship years with General Choi for many years. I traveled the world with him. I understood very well his concerns and his goals for the ITF. So, I think that it is very good to have a new president who can continue his legacy. Second, I have experience in management and business development. Third, I have gone through different levels during my career in TAEKWON-DO, going from student, to instructor, coach, national association president, chair of various ITF committees, and President of a continental federation. In short, I believe I understand truly the needs of the ITF and the expectations of its members.



When I was invited to run for president, and following positive outcomes consultations and expressed support from my family and friends, I decided to file the official documents pertaining to my nomination to Master Tom MacCallum, Secretary General of the ITF. I think it was two months before the Congress.

MKJ: What are the main plans and vision of the ITF for the future?

At first ITF need vision. My vision is to promote the ITF following 4 facets:

- The ITF Taekwon-do as a sport. There is a lot of things that can be done to improve the sport aspect of TAEKWON-DO. Particularly, the ITF tournaments should have better rules to attract people and to have fairer judging. ITF tournaments should be held in prestigious places around the world to give it good visibility.
- ITF Taekwon-do as a martial art. It is very important to promote this aspect because it is through the martial art spirit that we will keep the real essence of Taekwon-do so martial art - we are talking about self-defense techniques, traditional values, and protocol. We have a lot of work to do on that.
- ITF Taekwon-Do as a way of life. In his last book entitled "The guideline for the moral culture", General Choi expressed when he was in a free country, he hoped that the next generation would develop more of the "Do". Taekwon-Do, as we write it, is written in two words and linked with a hyphen. For me, the ITF needs to develop a program to teach mental training, particularly the moral culture, in order to assist ITF instructors in their teaching with clear objectives, program content and methods. It is very important to improve the person, to develop good citizens for our society. This project is well under way. I have valuable resources to work with me on it. I believe that we will be able to present a suitable training program for the implementation of our strategic teaching project at our ITF Congress meeting in Dormunt, Germany in July 2005. and to propose.
- ITF Taekwon-Do as a tool for social development. It is important to use Taekwon-Do to contribute to the development of our society. We should not develop Taekwon-do only for ourselves. It is unfortunate that we face so many social problems: drug and alcohol abuse, violent behaviour, and loss of moral values which is the basis of society. I would like ITF to be active in bringing Taekwon-do to the poor and low-income people and to areas where there are major social problems. It is part of my plans for the next two years to establishment a foundation that will provide ITF with suitable financial resources to be involved in social development.



MKJ: What is the most important problem concerning ITF that needs to be addressed?

TTQ: I would like to clarify the legal status of the ITF. For me, there is only one ITF. The Board of Directors I lead is the international organization. It runs in conformity with ITF Constitution. There are some individuals who represent themselves as ITF spokespersons! They act in violation of the ITF

Constitution and therefore, they act illegally. It is the duty of my ITF Board of Directors to solve this matter.

I also think that the modernization of our operations by providing good rules (By-Laws and policies) and by having a good team to develop ITF business are essential for govern ITF effectively and to ensure harmony between ITF and its affiliated organizations. All of this is to ensure that ITF provides good quality services to its members and that the ITF membership continues to grow.

In the last 16 months, our team (the ITF Board of Directors, the Chairs of the Standing Committees) has worked effectively and very hard toward the same goals without any political interference. We did a lot! We have reached the objectives that I outlined at the Congress following my election: a revised Constitution, an updated By-law No 1 on better governance, and some major policies are now in place. We are proud to tell our members and the general public that we now have the ingredients that makes ITF a truly professional organization.

MKJ: Do you think there are things, which we should be concerned about with regard the situation created by Chang Ung?

TTQ: No, I don't think so. It is very clear for me that the North Korean group made a big mistake when they proclaimed illegally Mr. Chang Ung ITF President in Pyongyang. In July 2002, when Mr. Chang Ung was warned by Mr. Russel MacLellan, acting ITF President in accordance with the ITF Constitution, to stop all misrepresentation as leader of the ITF, the North Koreans panicked. In October 2002, Master Leong Wai Meng admitted to me during a visit in Quebec City that the North Koreans set up the "special congress" in Pyongyang because they were afraid to lose the control of ITF. As a new comer to the ITF, Mr. Chang Ung had received bad advice from his supporters who under-estimated the maturity of our members to stand for justice and democracy! Mr. Chang Ung's group now needs to save face. This is why they drag us into a long and protracted legal process in Austria. This maintains a confusing situation, useful for their propaganda.

However, I think that it is only a matter of time before this legal problem is solved. I would like to ask all of our ITF members, who are concerned by this situation to be patient and to understand that the most important thing for all of us is the continued progress of our organization!

MKJ: Is your life different now from what it was before your election?

Of course, I am busier than ever before with the management of the ITF and many missions to different parts of the world. I have to take care of my Canadian consulting firm. But I am still the same person! (smile) For me, being the President of the ITF is a question of duty. I try to fulfill my responsibilities with integrity and conviction. As a person, I also have to live a normal and balanced life. I like to be close to people and to be with my family and my friends. We have activities together. I am very happy.

MKJ: Do you have any model or example that you would like to emulate?

TTQ: I do not have a specific model. First, I prefer to live and to act according to ethical principles and values, particularly the philosophy, the tenets of TAEKWON-DO and the teachings of Confucius and Buddha. When I take the decision, I need to have these principles to guide me to insure that I take a decision that I will not regret later. For me, this is a way of life! This why I would like to promote this approach through the teaching of the Do. Some persons have had important influences in my life: General Choi with his knowledge and his determination, my mother with her patience and her compassion.

MKJ: What have been your accomplishments since your election in June 2003?

TTQ: First, I analyzed the organization. Then, I made a list of what had to be done and what was

right for the organization. The priority was the communication with our members and the general public. The best channel to communicate with them was through Internet. Accordingly, we modernized our ITF website. Now, we work hard to keep it informative and interesting.

Second, I focused on the structure of the ITF. It is important to work as a team in our organization. I consider myself as a chief of musical orchestra! I concentrated my efforts on developing a good team spirit within the ITF Board of Directors and the Chairs of the Standing Committees. I have a very good cooperation from all of them. We have had several meetings during which we have taken many good decisions. We have very effective and very productive meetings. My current concern is to encourage all Standing Committees to be active and to provide concrete results in accordance with the action plan that we have established. I can tell you now that our people have made good progress. The Technical Committee, for example, works very well and the result has been very successful international instructors courses!

Third, another important issue is the operation of the ITF. The ITF must run effectively and fairly. So, we spent a lot of time to elaborate the By-Law No 1, which contains all requirements and rules for our ITF affiliated organizations and individual members.

Fourth, we worked on key policies. Recently, the Board of Directors adopted four important policies dealing with different issues: admission and readmission of members, criteria for promotion to 7th degree and higher, recognition of degrees from other organizations, guidance for opening of new schools.

I am very proud of what we have achieved. I think that it is very important for an international and a professional martial art organization such as ITF. We need all of this to deal correctly and fairly with people. We note that it produces good results. Over the last six months, for example, we have seen an increase in our membership. Many new members have joined us, including some large groups. Also, many of our former members have decided to comeback.

We want to be creative as well. This is why we develop new activities. We now have the World Cup, which is open to all TAEKWON-DO practitioners regardless of their affiliation. I believe it is a good initiative and a good marketing tool for the ITF. We will hold an international technical conference for our higher Black Belt holders so as to have the opportunity to train together and to share our experience and our concerns with regard to the technical aspect of TAEKWON-DO. We would like to work closely with our members. We listen to them and we act according to their needs and expectations.

MKJ: Do you expect to win the battle for real Taekwon-do?

TTQ: I am sure that we will win! It is a matter of time. I have more than thirty years of experience as an engineer who has testified in court regarding building codes. Our case is before the court of justice. We have good arguments and the court needs time to exam them. I hope we will see the end of it in the near future.



MKJ: What is the most important thing in life for you?

TTQ: To enjoy what I do. To enjoy the people around me. To be happy with my family and my friends. When I pass away, I hope that the people remember me as a person who contributed to the progress of the collectivity.

MKJ: What was General Choi Hong Hi for you?

As I mentioned earlier, General Choi is important to me. I have many good memories of him. I have learned a lot from him. I consider him as my father.

MKJ: What would you like to say to all Taekwon-do practitioners?

TTQ: I would like to say to all ITF members and all Taekwon-do practitioners who are not affiliated to ITF, that Taekwon-do is a fantastic martial art. I recommend to them to practice and to teach all four facets of Taekwon-do as I explained earlier. I hope that more and more people will understand that Taekwon-do does not belong on any one country of group. It originated from Korea but it belongs to everyone.

The democratic process must be applied in all TAEKWON-DO organizations so as to ensure that the right people are elected for the right positions. It is also essential that they serve the needs and the interest of their organization in accordance with the principles of ethics and the spirit of the true martial art.

We have to develop friendship through TAEKWON-DO activities. I wish sincerely that the movement of Taekwon-do becomes one day a large and worldwide family, without any discrimination. It is also my wish that Taekwon-do can be helpful to humanity.